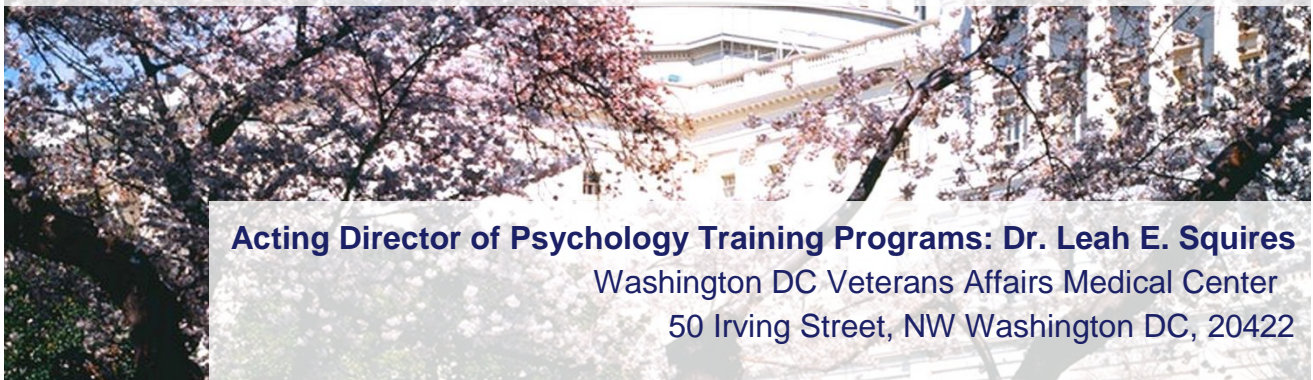


PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM BROCHURE

2019-2020 Training Year



WASHINGTON D.C. VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
CAPITOL ★ EXCELLENCE



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Introduction

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in the predoctoral psychology training program at the Washington D.C. VA Medical Center (DC VAMC). We appreciate that applying for an internship can be a challenging process, and we hope that this brochure provides you with a concise overview of our psychology training program. More information can be found in our handbook to further assist you in making a well-informed decision regarding your future training.

The DC VAMC offers a generalist psychology training internship program to qualified graduate students in an APA-accredited clinical or counseling psychology doctoral programs. Our training program prepares psychology interns for the effective, independent, and ethical practice of professional psychology. Because psychologists participate widely in this large and active teaching center, interns are exposed to a broad range of potential training experiences, including those in traditional psychiatric settings, therapeutic communities, and contemporary health psychology. Our staff and Veteran population reflect the vibrant multi-ethnic communities in the greater metropolitan Washington D.C. area. Training is a very high priority at the DC VAMC. The internship program has been accredited by the American Psychological Association since 1981. At this time, we offer seven internship positions. Staff psychologists adhere to a diverse range of theoretical orientations and are trained in a variety of evidenced based clinical practices. The variety within our medical center and the diversity among our staff enables us to approach each intern's training through an individualized plan, with the goal of maximizing the intern's personal growth and professional competence.

Philosophy of Training

In our program, we collectively view it as our mission to support psychology trainees in developing their individual identities as psychologists while ensuring they possess the necessary skills and competencies to advance towards independence. Two areas our program highlights are diversity/inclusion and program evaluation/program development. Our program attends to and values the diversity reflected in our staff, trainees and the veterans we serve, and emphasizes the importance of preparing psychology trainees to deliver patient centered, evidence-based psychological services that incorporates individual and cultural diversity at all aspects of assessment, treatment planning and intervention. We offer multiple opportunities for psychology trainees to become involved in program evaluation, with the intent of encouraging them to think about how they can develop and improve clinical, research, and systems processes for the future.

Diversity Statement

The Psychology Training Program of the DC VAMC places diversity and inclusion at the core of our training philosophy. We take very seriously our responsibility to contribute to the development of psychologists who are prepared to provide patient centered, evidence-based treatment to individuals of diverse, intersecting identities. We promote diversity at every level within our training program and under the larger umbrella of the Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) in which our training program operates. We believe that selecting the country's top talent for trainees and for staff positions from all groups within our communities helps us better serve the Veterans with whom we work and gives us the high level skill set we need to work with such a complex population.

Our training program recruits fellow and intern applicants from hundreds of unique colleges and universities across the United States. Among these institutions are Hispanic Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, and Native American Serving Institutions. As a federal employer, the DC VAMC strictly follows all EEOC policies on fair recruitment and other personnel practices. Job announcements are nationally advertised on USAJOBS, a federal workforce website, which opens VA employment opportunities to a wide variety of applicants from different geographical areas, socioeconomic groups, cultural backgrounds, and ethnicities.

We aim to take diversity beyond mere representation of different identities towards authentic inclusion. We recognize that gains with regards to representation of diverse groups in our trainee and staff will not be sustained if our work environment does not promote engagement of all team members. We are committed to recognizing and celebrating the intersecting identities of our psychology trainees and staff and work to create brave spaces in didactics and supervision where challenging conversations about practicing psychology in a diverse world can occur.

Washington D. C. VA Medical Center

All internship training takes place at the Washington DC VA Medical Center (DC VAMC) and its five surrounding Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). Located in the nation's capital, the DC VAMC is among the most visible and dynamic facilities in the entire VA system. The DC VAMC is under the authority of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), which is the part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that is responsible for providing health care for Veterans, as well as funding health research and training for health care providers. Veterans seen at the DC VAMC have served in various military conflict eras, including Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OIF/OEF/OND), Kosovo, Bosnia, Desert Storm/Desert Shield, Lebanon, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, and World War II. The DC VAMC also serves Veterans who experienced non-combat traumas, including Military Sexual Trauma (MST), training accidents, and responses to natural disasters.

The DC VAMC is a comprehensive medical center that treats Veterans of all genders who have a wide array of medical and psychiatric needs in both inpatient and outpatient settings. The DC VAMC is considered to be a tertiary care, Complexity Level 1B facility. The DC VAMC is part of the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 5; VISN 5 includes the Baltimore VAMC, Beckley VAMC, Huntington VAMC, Louis A. Johnson VAMC, Loch Raven VA Community Living and Rehabilitation Center, Martinsburg VAMC, Perry Point VAMC, and Washington DC VAMC. The DC VAMC is also the designated Polytrauma Network Site for VISN5.

Elements of the Training Year

Goals of Internship

The DC VAMC Psychology Service runs an active APA Accredited Predoctoral Internship Program. Currently there are seven interns. Our internship program is a generalist model. The training program follows the "Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology" (<https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/policies/standards-of-accreditation.pdf>) and the Code of Ethics of the American Psychological Association (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.pdf>). These guidelines give our program its direction and guide our professional practice. As a member of APPIC, we also follow the standards and guidelines that pertain to all APPIC Internship Programs (<https://www.appic.org/Internships/Internship-Membership-Criteria>). Consistent with the Standards of Accreditation for programs in Health Service Psychology, at the DCVAMC our training program attends to and assesses interns' competence in the following areas:

- 1. Research**
- 2. Ethical and legal standards**
- 3. Individual and cultural diversity**
- 4. Professional values, attitudes and behaviors**
- 5. Communication and Interpersonal skills**
- 6. Assessment**
- 7. Intervention**
- 8. Supervision**
- 9. Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills**

Throughout your training year, you will be evaluated by your supervisors in these areas. Below are descriptions of how we address each competency area.

1. Practice Anchored in Professional Research Literature: Interns make use of clinical research literature to inform their practice. Supervisors model incorporation of research findings into clinical decision making. Finally, interns also have the option to complete a year-long enrichment experience in program evaluation/research.

2. Ethical and Legal Standards: It is our expectation that interns join us with a basic understanding of the ethical and legal standards that pertain to the practice of psychology. Interns are evaluated by supervisors with regards to awareness of ethical issues and demonstrated competence in addressing ethical dilemmas in practice.

3. Individual and cultural Diversity: Our program places individual and cultural diversity at the core of our training philosophy. Attention to diversity is infused throughout all elements of our training program, from clinical supervision, didactics and other training opportunities. Interns are evaluated by their supervisors with regards to awareness and incorporation of individual and cultural diversity into their practice. Interns are also asked to provide feedback regarding attention to diversity in didactics and supervision.

4. Professional Values, Attitudes and Behaviors: Administrative and professional issues frequently arise in day-to-day practice and are formally addressed in supervision and staff meetings. These issues include patient safety and confidentiality, maintaining positive professional relationships, knowing when to seek consultation with staff, and assuming responsibility for key patient care tasks.

5. Communication and Interpersonal skills: Interns are evaluated at each rotation with regards to communication and interpersonal skills with patients, staff and supervisors.

6. Assessment: The internship focuses on the use of structured clinical interviewing supplemented with psychological, cognitive, diagnostic, and neuropsychological assessment measures in treating patients with a variety of presenting problems. The impact of family, work setting, current hospitalization, and other facets of an individual's intersecting identities on their presentation is considered. Individualized assessment is emphasized, and training is given in the use of computer-supported assessment tools.

7. Intervention: The internship includes systematic training in a range of evidence-based psychotherapies. Training in psychotherapeutic approaches is intended to build on the interns' current skills and based upon the development of these skills over the course of the internship, intern responsibilities increase in complexity and level of autonomy. In addition to rotation-based intervention training, for their long-term enrichment experience interns can choose from a selection of year-long experiences training in one of several evidence-based psychotherapies offered by the VA.

8. Supervision: At the intern level training in supervision is provided on select rotations where interns may participate in the supervision of other psychology trainees. To ensure that all interns gain exposure to the practice of supervision, interns also have didactic presentations about evidenced based supervision.

9. Consultation: Consultation is a separate and essential area of expertise for professional psychologists that involves answering referral questions from interdisciplinary staff. Interns are frequently working on interdisciplinary teams where they have opportunities to first observe supervisors responding to consults, and then take a more active and independent role in responding to referral questions.

Meet Our Psychology Training Committee

The training committee consists of the Acting Director of Psychology Training Programs, psychology staff members, and the Acting Chief, Psychology Service as an ex-officio member. Two of our most important members are our intern and postdoctoral fellow representatives. The committee meets at least monthly or more frequently, as needed. Policy recommendations, training philosophy, and development and evaluation of the psychology training program are the responsibilities of the training committee. As a member of APPIC, we also follow the standards and guidelines that pertain to all APPIC Internship Programs (<https://www.appic.org/Internships/Internship-Membership-Criteria>).

Our Training Committee consists of the following members:

Aparna Arjunan	Scott Levson	Leonard Tate
Christine Brown	Melanie Paci	Slavomir Zapata (Acting Chief, Psychology Service)
Nicole Cammack	Lauren Skalina	Parin Zaveri
Lisa Carlin	Jennifer Strang	Intern representative
Michael Greenfield	Leah Squires (ADPT)	Postdoctoral representative

Components of the Internship Program

The internship year is comprised of three 4-month rotation periods. Each of these rotation periods include these major components

- I. Rotations
- II. Long-term Enrichment Experiences
- III. Comprehensive Assessments
- IV. Didactics

The following pages will provide you with information on each of these elements. More detailed information can be found in our Training Handbook.

Rotation Experiences

Community Living Center (CLC)

The CLC is the Veterans Affairs sponsored 120-bed nursing facility that provides care to Veterans with short-term rehabilitation care needs and to Veterans with life-limiting, chronic medical and/or mental health diagnoses requiring skilled nursing care. This rotation provides a variety of training opportunities with the geriatric and rehabilitation population in the Capital View Community Living Center (CLC) of the Washington DC Veteran Affairs Medical Center, the VA-sponsored nursing home for Veterans. The CLC consists of three programs: The Rehabilitation Program (CARF Accredited), Long-Term Care Program, and Palliative and Hospice Care Program.

On this rotation you will:

- Provide brief and/or long-term therapy with Veterans with chronic, life-threatening or terminal illness using cognitive behavioral, motivational interviewing, narrative, reminiscence, and other evidenced-based psychotherapies (EBP).
- Learn non-pharmacological methods for managing disruptive behavior for dementia, traumatic brain disorders, and
- other diagnoses.
- Deliver services to Veterans and their family members across the disease continuum from initial diagnosis to death and subsequent bereavement.
- Conduct cognitive, psychological, and neuropsychological mental health screening assessments.
- Provide psycho-education and support groups to patients and caregivers.
- Participate in interdisciplinary integrated team consultation.
- Provide supervision to practicum trainees (when available).

CLC is offered as full or ½ time rotation.

CLC can accommodate 1 intern per rotation

CLC Supervisor:

Dr. Chanda Corbett received her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Temple University. Dr. Corbett has provided individual, couples, and family counseling, psychotherapy, and training services in university counseling centers, private practice, and nursing homes and assisted living facilities. After years of practicing as a psychologist on college campuses, she accepted the opportunity to develop skills and practice in the field of Geropsychology in 2010. Dr. Corbett has also completed the Dementia Capable Care Instructor Certification, the STAR-VA Program for Managing Challenging Dementia-Related Behaviors Behavioral Coordinator training, and the Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers' Health (Reach VA) certification.

Compensation & Pension (C&P)

Veterans who are disabled through their military service are eligible to receive disability benefits through the VA. For Veterans applying for benefits, a C & P examination to evaluate their disability might be required. Psychologists' roles within C & P is to verify that a Veteran meets criteria for the psychological disorder for which they are claiming benefits. This evaluation is done through a combination of chart review and an in-person interview with the Veteran. This rotation is a unique experience to sharpen your diagnostic skills and learn about a unique aspect of the VA system.

On this rotation you will:

- Gain familiarity with the VA compensation and pension examination for mental health conditions.
- Administer structured assessments and compile reports that are used by the Veterans Benefits Administration to aid with benefit claims
- Be exposed to a wide range of presenting concerns.

C & P is offered as a ½ rotation only.

C & P can accommodate one intern per rotation

C&P Supervisor

Dr. Susan Mareck obtained her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of South Dakota. She interned at the Mid-Missouri Psychology Consortium and completed a fellowship in Health Psychology at the University of Minnesota Hospital and Clinics. Dr. Mareck worked for seven years at North Memorial Medical Center in Robbinsdale, MN doing crisis evaluations in the emergency room before coming to the DC VAMC. Her interests include health psychology, crisis intervention, and integrated dual diagnosis assessment and treatment.

Health Psychology

The specialty of Clinical Health Psychology focuses on applying biopsychosocial knowledge of health and disease to promote physical and mental well-being. Health Psychology at the DC VAMC is a consultation-based specialty service. Health psychologists play an integral role within interdisciplinary teams in the Infectious Diseases (ID) clinic, Oncology department, Low Vision/Visual Rehabilitation clinic, MOVE! program for weight management, Breathe Easy program for smoking cessation, and the Sleep and Pain Clinics. This rotation has a strong assessment component including bariatric pre-surgical assessments and organ transplant evaluations. Our aim is to provide a broad experience in Health Psychology that flexibly meets the training needs of interns. Prior experience with Health Psychology is not required.

On this rotation you will:

- Conduct integrated pre-surgical mental health assessments for solid organ transplant and bariatric candidates.

- Deliver evidence-based interventions for a range of health concerns (e.g. HIV, Cancer, etc) in both individual and group treatment modalities.
- Assess and screen new chemotherapy patients for distress and understanding of their disease and treatment. Gain experience working as a member of multiple interdisciplinary teams (e.g. Oncology, HIV, Weight management, etc.).
- Provide inpatient consultation services to veterans experiencing acute medical illnesses requiring psychological assessment and interventions.
- Participate in medical center health promotion initiatives and contribute to ongoing evaluation of existing programs.

Additional experiences:

To round out the rotation, interns may choose from the following options based upon their interests and training goals.

- Prostate Cancer Group
- Additional Health Promotion Groups (MOVE! Breathe Easy) HIV/HCV weekly webinar
- HIV Clinic Groups (Support group, Healthy Relationships, Depression & Adherence) Focused training in CBT-Insomnia or CBT-Chronic Pain within the Neurology Pain Clinic.

Health Psychology is offered as a full rotation, with an option for an additional ½ rotation. Health Psychology can accommodate 1 intern during the first rotation.

Health Psychology Supervisors

Dr. Lynne Padgett completed her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in Behavioral Medicine and Research Design and Statistics. Her post-doctoral fellowship was in rehabilitation psychology at Emory University School of Medicine. She has worked in research funding for the National Cancer Institute, where she was the technical expert in cancer survivorship and palliative care. Her clinical approach uses evidence-based and guideline concordant therapies that focuses on cognitive behavioral approaches to help medical patients, particularly those with cancer, maximize their highest level of function. Her supervision style is also behaviorally focused and loosely structured, and she commonly use assessments.

Dr. Michelle Siegel completed her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Loyola University Maryland. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the DC VAMC and was subsequently hired as a psychologist for the Pain Clinic. Dr. Siegel earned her Diplomate in Behavioral Sleep Medicine in 2019 and transitioned full time to the VA's Sleep Medicine Clinic. Dr. Siegel provides Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) on an individual basis and collaborated with the Sleep Medicine team to develop and implement a Positive Airway Pressure adherence group for Veterans with sleep apnea. As part of her partnership with the hospital's migraine clinic, Dr. Siegel brought biofeedback to the DC VAMC and provides treatment for headaches.

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) serves Veterans whose physical health and/or limited mobility significantly impacts their ability to travel to the hospital/clinics for medical care. Interns function as part of a small, cohesive multidisciplinary team that travels to the Veteran's place of residence to provide services. Interns on this rotation also have the opportunity to contribute to the twice-monthly half-day amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) clinic on campus.

On this rotation you will:

- Assess home-bound Veterans for mental health conditions including suicidality and dangerousness, providing treatment, and/or coordinating referral as needed.
- Provide individual psychotherapy to Veterans coping with grief and loss associated with disability and other life transitions. Implement
- behavioral medicine interventions for pain, disability, sleep problems, smoking cessation, and medical compliance.
- Complete cognitive screening to address specific functional questions and/or to coordinate referral for neuropsychological evaluation.
- Provide psycho-education and support to the Veteran, spouse, family members/caregivers, and others who play an important role in keeping the Veteran at home.

HBPC is offered as a ½ time rotation only.

HBPC can accommodate 1 intern per rotation period.

HBPC Supervisors

Dr. Christine Brown earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. She has been licensed as a clinical psychologist in Texas since 2000. Dr. Brown is a member of the psychology department's training committee and provides supervision to both psychology interns and practicum students. She also sees Veterans through our Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) clinic.

Dr. Katie Chipungu earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Health Psychology from the University of Miami. She completed her internship and post-doctoral fellowship at Henry Ford Health Systems in Detroit, Michigan. During her training, she completed rotations in Consultation-Liaison, Transplant, Outpatient Behavioral Health, Oncology, Emergency Medicine, Bariatric Surgery, Anesthesia Pain and Pelvic Pain. Her clinical and research interests include the promotion of healthy lifestyle changes within chronic medical illnesses as well as the reduction of racial/ethnic health disparities.

Dr. Sanjay Mehta received his bachelor's degree from the Binghamton University (State University of New York) and his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology. He works primarily with the team located at the Charlotte Hall community-based outpatient clinic to provide in-home care to Veterans suffering from chronic medical conditions and support for their caregivers. His clinical interests include emotional adjustment to chronic medical illnesses and health promotion, psychological issues related to end of life care, cognitive assessment, and management of behavioral concerns in patients suffering with dementia.

Mental Health Clinic (MHC)

The Mental Health Clinic (MHC) is a multidisciplinary program that provides outpatient medical, psychiatric, and social work services to Veterans. Referrals to MHC Psychology come from a wide range of sources, including Primary Care Mental Health Integration, MHC Psychiatry or other mental health programs within the hospital.

On this rotation you will:

- Provide individual evidence-based psychotherapy to address a range of presenting concerns including PTSD, depression, anxiety, OCD, etc. EBPs used in the MHC include but are not limited to CBT, ACT, DBT, CPT, PE, Skills Training for Affective and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR-NST), Seeking Safety, Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), Interpersonal Therapy (IPT), and Interpersonal and Social Rhythms Therapy (IPSRT).

- Have opportunities to co-lead groups that address a range of mental health needs using based- interventions.
- Integrate regular use of assessment measures (e.g., Beck Depression Inventory–II (BDI-II), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), and PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5) to evaluate treatment progress.

Mental Health clinic is offered as a ½ rotation.

MHC can accommodate 1 intern per rotation period.

MHC Supervisors

Dr. Kwesi Dunston obtained his M.S.W. from the University of Washington - Seattle, with a specialization in multicultural practice. He went on to obtain his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at the University of Iowa, where is specialized in multicultural psychology and assessment. He completed internship at the United States Medical Center for Federal Prisoners. He started his career as a staff psychologist at the United States Penitentiary – Canaan, where he worked with high custody inmates. In 2009, he transitioned to the position of Challenge Program Coordinator, where he managed a 120-bed residential substance abuse treatment program, working with high custody inmates, including those with serious mental illness. Beginning in 2018, Dr. Dunston started working in the Mental Health Clinic, at the Washington D.C., VA Medical Center. Clinically, Dr. Dunston is cognitive behaviorally oriented, and places a high level of importance on integrating assessment in the therapy process. He also operates from a framework that focuses on social justice.

Dr. Vanessa Moore received her undergraduate education at the University of Dayton and her Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the Ohio State University. A former intern of the Washington, DC VA Medical Center, Dr. Moore has a specialty interest in couples dynamics and psychotherapy. Additionally, she is co-coordinator of the Medical Center's Employee Assistance Program. Dr. Moore, a Washington DC native, is active in her church where she regularly makes presentations that seek to integrate spiritual and psychological issues as they pertain to optimal well-being.

Dr. Samantha Weltz acquired her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Dr. Weltz has training and experience in EBP including CBT, ERP, IPSRT, CPT, PE, STAIR, seeking safety, social skills therapy and parent management training (PMT). She provides individual therapy, group therapy (CBT skills group and the women's survivor group for military sexual trauma) and clinical supervision to trainees. Dr. Weltz's theoretical orientation is primarily integrative, incorporating elements from CBT, interpersonal theory and attachment perspectives.

Neuropsychology

Neuropsychological evaluations are often provided to Veterans who are experiencing decreased cognitive functioning, including short or long-term memory loss, attention problems, language impairment, perceptual difficulties, and problem-solving deficits. Evaluations are often used to clarify diagnosis, determine etiology of impairment, quantify functional loss, monitor changes in cognitive functioning as a result of treatment, and determine baseline level of cognitive functioning. This rotation is intended for interns with at least one prior practicum experience in neuropsychology. Interns interested in pursuing a career in neuropsychology can complete 50% of their training in neuropsychology as a major area of study, in accordance with the Division 40/Houston Guidelines, and are guaranteed neuropsychology as their first rotation. All three staff neuropsychologists are involved in training of interns, and two of the three are board-certified in clinical neuropsychology through the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP-CN). There are also several postdoctoral fellowship programs in the Washington, DC metropolitan area with which the neuropsychology clinic maintains a collaborative relationship.

On this rotation you will:

- Conduct outpatient neuropsychological assessment including chart review/case preparation, clinical interview, cognitive testing, scoring, report-writing, and provision of oral feedback.
- Conduct/observe inpatient neuropsychological assessment cases, typically for assessment of medical decision-making capacity.

- Provide cognitive rehabilitation in both individual and group formats.

Additional experiences:

To round out the rotation, interns may choose from the following options based upon their interests and training goals.

- Observe brain cutting procedure.

Neuropsychology is offered as a full time rotation for interns with at least one prior practicum experience in neuropsychology. Neuropsychology is also offered as optional ½ rotation for neuropsychology focused interns. Neuropsychology can accommodate 1-2 interns per rotation period.

Neuropsychology Supervisors

Dr. Ernest Aucone received a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in neuropsychology from Nova Southeastern University. He completed his clinical internship at the Boston VA Healthcare System/Harvard Medical School and a two-year APPCN accredited postdoctoral fellowship in clinical neuropsychology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. His clinical and research interests include traumatic brain injury, differential diagnosis in dementia, forensic neuropsychology (particularly determining competency); and neuropsychological/ cognitive rehabilitation. Dr. Aucone is a board-certified neuropsychologist and Director of Neuropsychology Service at the DC VAMC.

Dr. Lauren Skalina received her PhD in Clinical Psychology at American University. She completed her internship in the neuropsychology track at the VA Maryland Health Care System/University of Maryland-Baltimore Psychology Internship Consortium and a 2-year postdoctoral fellowship in clinical and research neuropsychology through the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) at the DC VAMC. Dr. Skalina has extensive clinical experience providing neuropsychological evaluations, individual and group psychotherapy, and cognitive rehabilitation for veterans. She is also involved in psychology training through supervision of externs, interns, and postdoctoral fellows.

Dr. Jennifer Strang received her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Arizona State University. She conducts neuropsychological evaluations with military Veterans with known or suspected cognitive deficits. She also facilitates cognitive rehabilitation groups in the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) and the Substance Abuse Recovery Program (SARP). Her areas of clinical and research interest include traumatic brain injury, cognitive rehabilitation, dementia, and the cognitive effects of neuropsychiatric disorders, such as depression and PTSD. Dr. Strang is board certified as a neuropsychologist.

Polytrauma Psychology

The Polytrauma Network Site at the Washington, DC VAMC offers specialized, post-acute rehabilitation for Veterans with traumatic brain injuries and polytraumatic conditions. Services provided by the DC VAMC Polytrauma team include interdisciplinary treatment planning, psychiatry (rehabilitation medicine), psychology, neuropsychology, case management, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, recreational therapy, vocational rehabilitation, low vision/blind rehabilitation, prosthetics, and other consultative services as needed.

On this rotation you will:

- Work as part of an interdisciplinary team to address the needs of veterans with a range of cognitive and functional abilities.
- Conduct both individual and group psychotherapy (examples include; ACT, Social Skills, Brain Boosters, Mindfulness & DBT skills).
- Conduct comprehensive outpatient Neuropsychological evaluations focusing on traumatic brain injury and concussion.

Additional experiences:

To round out the rotation, interns may choose from the following options based upon their interests and training goals.

- Participate in interdisciplinary team meetings and rehabilitation grand rounds

Polytrauma is offered as a ½ time rotation.

Polytrauma can accommodate one intern per rotation.

Polytrauma Supervisors

Dr. Scott Levson obtained his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Chestnut Hill College. Dr. Levson provides individual and group psychotherapy to Veterans who have experienced brain injuries and/or related traumas. He also enjoys teaching and has held adjunct faculty appointments at Chestnut Hill College. Dr. Levson is certified in CPT for PTSD and integrates psychodynamic theories with DBT and ACT into his clinical work.

Dr. Carolyn Sherer obtained her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Indianapolis. She provides neuropsychological evaluations for Veterans with known or suspected cognitive deficits (e.g. attention, processing speed, executive functioning, language, visuospatial skills, memory, sensorimotor). She also provides group and individual therapy to veterans coping with brain injury, interpersonal difficulties, anxiety, and depression. Her areas of special interest include neuroanatomy, effort testing, repeated concussions/head injuries (including chronic traumatic encephalopathy), and caregiver support.

Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)

PCMHI is part of Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT), which provide integrated health services that are both comprehensive and preventative in nature. The foundation of PACT is the Integrated treatment team, on which psychologists have traditionally played central roles as a Behavioral Health Consultant for Primary Care Providers and their patients. PC-MHI serves Veterans with mild-to-moderate symptom distress and/or concerns in the areas of stress management, weight management, chronic pain, sleep hygiene/insomnia/CPAP compliance, smoking cessation, grief, relationship difficulties, and mild-to-moderate alcohol consumption. PC-MHI also performs initial evaluations for PTSD. Psychology interns will have an intensive experience in the co-located, collaborative care model. The experience is fast-paced, and trainees will be exposed to a range of different presenting issues and relevant treatment packages.

On this rotation you will:

- Provide mental health services alongside psychiatrists, primary care physicians, nurses, and trainees from other disciplines.
- Collaborate with other team members about the mental health needs of Veterans.
- Conduct brief assessment, intervention, and referrals to specialty clinics when needed.
- Provide brief evidence-based interventions (4-6 sessions), including CBT, CBT-insomnia, problem solving, and motivational interviewing to address presenting problems such as depression, chronic pain, substance use disorders, and medical non-adherence.

Additional experiences:

To round out the rotation, interns may choose from the following options based upon their interests and training goals.

- Psychology interns may have the opportunity to supervise Practicum Trainees, particularly in the facilitation of PCMHI-based groups.
- Become involved in Staff Psychologists' Program Evaluation and Development activities, reviewing a specific clinic process within the context of VHA strategic priorities and developing recommendations for quality improvement.

- Collaborate with the Women's Health Psychologist and the Health Behavior Coordinator Co-Chair in facilitating psychotherapy groups, including Military Sexual Trauma groups, the VA's MOVE! Weight Management group, Tobacco Cessation, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Chronic Illness, and Brain Boosters.

PCMHI is offered as a ½ time rotation only.

PCMHI can accommodate 1 intern per rotation period

PCMHI Supervisors

Dr. Nicole Cammack earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from George Washington University. Prior to joining the VA, Dr. Cammack provided individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, and consultation to active duty service members, military dependent children, and their families at Fort Meade, Maryland. Dr. Cammack is a licensed Clinical Psychologist in the State of Maryland.

Dr. Michael Greenfield earned his Ph.D. degree in Clinical Psychology from American University. He uses an integrative approach in both therapy and supervision, applying techniques from cognitive-behavior and client-centered perspectives. He is certified through the VHA's EBP training program in CBT for Depression and CBT for Chronic Pain. Dr. Greenfield is interested in factors involved in VA Psychology Trainee satisfaction and engagement and is pursuing a certification in Project/Program Management through the Federal Acquisition Institute. He holds several Psychology Training Committee roles, including the Co-leader of Program Evaluation training for Postdoctoral Fellows.

Dr. Mauli Shah earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Maryland with an emphasis on Behavioral Medicine. The majority of her training experiences are within Behavioral Medicine / Health Psychology. She is certified through the VHA's EBP training program in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for Insomnia, CBT for Depression, Problem Solving Training, and PC-MHI Co-located Collaborative Care. In addition, Dr. Shah has received training and supervision/consultation in several evidence-based psychotherapies, including: Motivational Interviewing, Mindfulness, CBT for Pain, DBT skills, CPT, PR, and exposure/response prevention for anxiety disorders.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC)/ Acute Inpatient Unit

The Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) is an outpatient skill building interprofessional treatment program that provides mental health services for Veterans who are suffering from severe and persistent mental illness (e.g., Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, and PTSD) with significant functional impairment. The PRRC consists of a dedicated multidisciplinary team comprised of (but not limited to) Psychologists, Nurses, Clinical Social Workers, a Recreational Therapist, Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists and Peer Support Specialists.

On this rotation you will:

- Gain experience facilitating skills-based groups, individual therapy and administering comprehensive recovery-oriented risk assessments.
- Complete two recovery-based psychological assessments that aim to identify a Veteran's treatment goals, highlight a Veteran's strengths, assess for safety, and identify strategies to support a Veteran in their mental health recovery process.
- Receive training in and deliver a variety of EBP, including (but not limited to): ACT, CBT (for a variety of presenting concerns), DBT, Social Skills Training, IPT, Problem-Solving Therapy, Seeking Safety, and STAIR.
- Administered measures to evaluate treatment progress in individual psychotherapy.
- Collaborate with PRRC leadership on performance improvement initiatives.

Additional experiences:

To round out the rotation, interns may choose from the following options based upon their interests and training goals.

- Collaborate with the Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC), Dr. Uram, and PRRC Program Director, Dr. Zaveri, on recovery-oriented program evaluation and performance improvement initiatives in the PRRC and/or the Acute Psychiatry Inpatient Unit.

PRRC is offered as a full rotation, with an option for an additional ½ rotation.

PRRC can accommodate 1-2 interns per rotation period

PRRC Supervisors

Dr. Melanie Paci acquired her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Long Island University. She completed an internship at the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System/Manhattan Campus and then was employed as a supervising psychologist at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital's Psychiatric Recovery Center in New York prior to joining the DC VAMC psychology staff in 2009. She uses an integrative approach in both therapy and supervision, applying techniques from cognitive-behavioral, client-centered, and psychodynamic/interpersonal models. During her time at VA, she has obtained certification in several evidence-based psychotherapies.

Dr. Nicolas Uram acquired his Psy.D. in Counseling Psychology from Chatham University. He has cultivated a passion for third wave behavioral therapy, particularly ACT. Dr. Uram incorporates values-informed and mindfulness-based intervention into his individual practice with veterans and using those theories to inform initiatives that champion recovery at DC VAMC. He also conducts groups in the PRRC and on the inpatient psychiatric unit. In addition to his clinical duties, Dr. Uram serves as co-chair to the Disruptive Behavior Committee, is involved as a liaison to the Veterans Mental Health Council and serves as the Local Recovery Coordinator.

Dr. Parin Zaveri acquired his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from George Mason University. He provides individual and group therapy to Veterans diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness. His professional interests include provision of clinical supervision/mentoring, acceptance-based Interventions, and suicidality. Dr. Zaveri has received additional VA training on several evidence-based treatments, including CBT-Depression, CBT-Psychosis, ACT, IPT, CPT, and MI. He is a Master Trainer for Problem Solving Therapy and CBT-Chronic Pain.

Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP)

SARP is an intensive outpatient drug treatment program that uses a multidisciplinary team (e.g., psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, recreational therapist, addiction therapists, peer support specialists, clinical nurse specialists) to treat Veterans with alcohol and drug addictions. SARP offers a dynamic patient population, serving Veterans ranging from ages 21-80+, who present with substance use disorder associated with alcohol as well as a range of other substances such as opioids, cocaine, PCP, marijuana and prescription medications. In addition, many Veterans often struggle with an array of co-occurring psychiatric disorders, including depression, PTSD, Bipolar, personality disorders, psychosocial issues as well as various medical conditions associated with substance use (HIV and Hep C). They advance through phases of treatment in the 10-week program based on progress made.

On this rotation you will:

- Provide psychotherapy to 5-6 individual clients weekly primarily using a CBT framework. Learn additional evidence-based practices, including ACT and MI.
- Co-lead 1-2 groups (e.g. CBT for Depression) to address substance use disorders.
- Participate as a member of an integrated treatment team in clinic meetings.
- Participate in didactics on topics including assessment, ACT, and substance use disorders.
- Periodically conduct assessments as needed for treatment planning and clarification.
- Supervise externs (when available)

SARP is offered as a ½ rotation.

SARP can accommodate one intern per rotation period

SARP Supervisor

Dr. Leonard Tate received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Saint Louis University. He completed his doctoral internship and residency at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, where he treated the severely mentally ill, in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Dr. Tate has also worked with substance abusing and mentally ill inmates in forensic settings. He is a licensed Clinical Psychologist in the State of Maryland.

Trauma Services Program (TSP)

The Trauma Services Program (TSP) is an outpatient clinic that provides treatment for PTSD to Veterans from all eras of service. While many Veterans in TSP served in combat, we treat Veterans with a variety of traumatic experiences that occurred during military service including, but not limited to, military sexual trauma (MST), training accidents, and motor vehicle accidents. The DC VAMC Trauma Services Program is a thriving and highly active clinic, consistently in the top 10 (of 120 VA trauma-specific programs) for the number of outpatient PTSD visits. The clinic is staffed by a multidisciplinary team of providers (i.e., psychologists, social workers, nurses, a recreation therapist, and peer support counselors).

On this rotation you will:

- Learn how to conduct comprehensive psychodiagnostic evaluations for PTSD and collaborative treatment planning.
- Gain experience in delivering evidence-based/evidence-trauma focused psychotherapies for PTSD (e.g., PE, CPT, DBT, STAIR, ACT).
- Co-lead evidence-based or evidence-informed group therapy for PTSD (e.g., CPT, STAIR, ACT, DBT).
- Participate in clinical team meetings.
- Other opportunities are available based on time and interest (e.g., program evaluation).

TSP is offered as a full rotation with an option for an additional ½ rotation

TSP can accommodate 2 interns per rotation period.

TSP Supervisors

Dr. Aparna Arjunan completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Suffolk University. Dr. Arjunan completed her postdoctoral fellowship with a trauma emphasis at the Washington DC VAMC and was excited to stay on in TSP as a staff psychologist. Dr. Arjunan has received specialized training in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), for which she is a certified provider. In addition to her interest in providing EBPs for PTSD, Dr. Arjunan is passionate about multicultural psychology and race-related issues, DBT, and assessment.

Dr. Lisa Carlin completed her PhD in Clinical Psychology from American University and her pre-doctoral internship at DC VAMC. Within TSP, she serves as the PTSD clinical team coordinator to help manage clinic referrals, treatment options, and treatment coordination. She also serves as the medical center's EBP coordinator. Dr. Carlin has also worked for the Laboratory for the Treatment of Suicide-related Ideation and Behavior at the Uniformed Services University and has a professional interest in treatment of suicidality for individuals with PTSD.

Dr. Ranon Cortell completed his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Catholic University of America. Dr. Cortell is Program Director of TSP where he oversees psychotherapy provision for Veterans who are diagnosed with PTSD and comorbid conditions. He is responsible for the supervision of TSP staff, including psychologists, social workers, nurses, peer specialists, and program support, and together with the Unit Training Coordinator, he oversees the psychology training program within TSP. Dr. Cortell also provides individual, group, and family therapy to veterans impacted by trauma.

Dr. Lea Didion completed her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology at Pepperdine University and her internship at the

DC VAMC. Dr. Didion then completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Salem, Virginia VAMC with an emphasis in PTSD treatment and research. After completing training, she moved to Germany to work as a contractor for the DoD at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) providing outpatient care to active duty service members, dependents, and veterans. After 2.5 years at LRMC and travelling in Europe Dr. Didion took a job at the Women's Center at the Tampa, FL VAMC for 2 years before deciding to relocate (again) back to Washington, DC.

Dr. Amanda Evans completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Emory University. Broadly, her work has focused on understanding whether and how mindfulness- and compassion-based interventions effect change in clinical populations. Dr. Evans has a particular interest in working with individuals who have suffered from traumatic experiences. Dr. Evans is a Cognitively-Based Compassion Training instructor. She has received intensive training in DBT, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, and CBT. In her therapeutic work, she integrates these approaches within an interpersonal orientation.

Dr. Moshe Miller completed his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology at Loyola University Maryland. Dr. Miller completed his internship at the DC VAMC. He is a process-based CBT clinician. This includes engaging directly in Evidence-Based Psychotherapies such as PE, CPT, ACT, ExRP and Mindfulness-Based CBT, as well as flexibly applying the mechanisms of change that underlie these treatments to the individual client.

Dr. Noelle Opsahl completed her Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Gallaudet University and her internship at the DC VA Medical Center. Dr. Opsahl serves as the Women's Track Coordinator and is trained in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Dr. Opsahl uses an integrative approach in both therapy and supervision, applying techniques from cognitive behavioral, acceptance-based, feminist, multicultural, and client-centered lenses. Before returning to school for her Ph.D., she was an educator of the Deaf in various school systems nationally and internationally with a Master's of Education of the Deaf degree from Smith College

Long-term Enrichment Experience

In addition to completing three, four-month rotation sequences interns also participate in one long-term enrichment training experience. This long-term enrichment training experience is year-long and is designed to give interns an opportunity to take part in a specialized training opportunity. Six hours of an intern's week is allotted for the long-term training experience. Interns choose their long-term enrichment training experience at the start of the training year from the following list:

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is an evidence-based psychotherapy for several mental health disorders. Participation in the ACT enrichment experience will allow psychology interns to develop theoretical knowledge of ACT principles and apply them in both individual and group settings. Psychology interns who successfully complete the ACT VA roll-out requirements will have the opportunity to receive ACT VA provider status, which is granted to interns, following licensure, who remain in the VAMC system.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is modeled after the training provided to psychologists in the VA system. Interns participate in three phases of training: the experiential phase; the consultation phase; and the advanced practice phase. Completing this enrichment experience should enable the interns to meet the equivalency criteria for provider status for the VA CBT-I roll out program. In addition, trainees will be able to put their clinical training hours toward board certification in behavioral sleep medicine (Diplomate of Behavioral Sleep Medicine; DBSM), should they wish to pursue this in the future.

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) is an evidenced-based psychotherapy for PTSD. Participation in the CPT enrichment experience is a valuable training opportunity that would enable psychology interns to attend a VA Roll-out Regional CPT 3-day face-to-face workshop. Following the 3-day workshop, interns attend weekly phone/in-person consultation (60-minute meetings) for at least 6 months, as they work with their CPT training cases (individual and/or group modalities). Psychology interns who successfully complete the CPT VA Roll-out requirements will have the opportunity to receive CPT VA provider status, which is granted to interns, following licensure, who remain in the VAMC system.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) has been shown to be effective for the stabilization and treatment of individuals suffering from a variety of emotion dysregulation problems, most notably those found in Borderline Personality Disorder. However, DBT has been successfully applied to individuals with other disorders of emotion dysregulation, including MDD, ADHD, Eating Disorders, and PTSD. The DBT Enrichment Element at the DC VAMC would have the psychology intern involved in four components: 1) individual therapy; 2) concurrent skills training groups for Veterans; 3) team consultation for therapists; and 4) telephone coaching (in some cases).

Program Evaluation/Program Development/Organizational Management/Research (PEPDOM-R). An innovative component of the training program is its focus on aligning training activities with both VHA and VISN 5 strategic plans, specifically following three guiding principles of being people-centric, results-driven, and forward looking. Therefore, In addition to preparing interns to be clinical service providers who are up to date with EBP, our program encourages trainees to consider how to use their research and evaluation skills to advance our field, either through traditional research, or clinically focused program assessment and quality improvement projects. Interns interested in program evaluation, program development or research may elect to devote their long-term experience contributing to improvement initiatives and programmatic evaluations within the medical center. Interns interested in this experience will meet with The Training Director and members of the PEPDOM Subcommittee at the start of the training year to learn about available projects and across the medical center. The Training Director will match interns with psychology staff based upon intern interest and available projects and provide guidance and oversight of the intern's training experience. Interns opting for this experience will also attend selected PEPDOM trainings that are part of the postdoctoral program.

Assessment Experiences

Each intern is **required to complete six** psychological assessments during the internship. By the end of the year, we want each intern to have experience with cognitive assessment, personality assessment, interviewing, and report writing. Assessment cases will most likely come from within your rotation experiences. For rotations where assessment is less available, members of the Assessment subcommittee are available to assist interns and supervisors in identifying appropriate assessment cases.

Didactics and Professional Development Series

Didactics are held on Fridays. Didactics for interns address key competencies in the areas of assessment, evidence-based psychotherapy ethical and legal standards for the profession, individual and cultural diversity and professional development and interprofessional skills.

Most topical didactics occur in the morning, there are also periodic meetings with the Director of Training Programs, and Professional Development presentations that occur on Friday afternoons.

Each week, a psychology staff member or an invited speaker from outside the department presents a lecture to the interns. Some of the topics that are regularly presented are suicide prevention, program evaluation, conducting an intake evaluation, military culture, and evidence-based practices. Dr. Christine Brown presents a series of ethics topics over the course of the year. This seminar reflects our commitment to providing interns with a full spectrum of learning experiences to support their development as psychologists, in accordance with the Standards of Accreditation.

In alignment with our goal for intern centered training, each year, the training program solicits suggestions from the interns for topics of interest that may be relevant to their work. The program works to identify knowledgeable speakers to present on those topics. If a presenter is unavailable, the training program aims to help identify online or other training opportunities that address the intern interest.

In addition to didactics presented by Washington DCVAMC staff, interns are encouraged to make use of available web-based training opportunities in their areas of interest, using the VA's Talent Management System and other web-based training platforms, and to attend onsite presentations offered by other services (e.g.,

Medical Grand Rounds, Neurology Rounds, Neuropsychology Seminar Series). Schedules for these trainings are made available to the interns and incorporated into training plans as appropriate during the year.

Each month, a professional development topic is presented by psychology staff or the Director of Psychology Training Programs. Topics are presented in a sequential order to address common milestones that interns are working to attain. As there is some overlap at times between intern and post-doctoral milestones, select presentations are presented to both cohorts.

Mentorship Program

Psychology interns have the opportunity to provide year-long mentorship to psychology externs at the DC VAMC. Currently, there are approximately 27 psychology externs at our Medical Center. During the summer before the start of the internship, interns interested in providing mentorship to externs will provide the Mentorship Committee with information on their interests and mentorship needs. The Committee then compiles this information into a mentorship guide, which is provided to practicum students at the beginning of the practicum year. Psychology externs then rank-order their mentor preferences and provide their preferences to the Mentorship Committee. Psychology interns typically meet with 1-2 mentees, individually, for a minimum of one hour per month and also receive engage in monthly mentorship meetings with a member of the Mentor Committee. Topics typically covered during mentorship with a practicum student include internship readiness, work-life balance, and consideration of future professional opportunities.

In addition, psychology interns have the opportunity to receive mentorship from a Staff Psychologist. Similar to externs, interns will be provided with a mentorship guide at the beginning of the psychology internship training year with a list of staff psychologists who are interested in providing mentorship. Interns will rank-order their mentor preferences and provide their preferences to the Mentorship Committee. Topics typically covered during mentorship meetings include discussion of post-internship job opportunities, work-life balance, and consideration of future professional opportunities.

Applying at a Glance

Match Number: 119311

Applications Due: November 1, 2019

Interview Notification Date: December 15, 2019

Interviews Conducted: January 6, 7, 9, 10, 2020

Match Results Released: February 21, 2020

Projected Internship Start Date: July 20, 2020

Number of Internship Positions: 7

Accreditation Status: The predoctoral internship at the Washington DC VA Medical Center is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association. The next site visit to our facility will be during the 2020 academic year. Questions related to the internship training program's accreditation status should be directed to the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (address: 750 1st Street, NE/Washington DC 20002; phone number: 202-336-5979; email: apaaccred@apa.org; website: www.apa.org/ed/accreditation).

To be eligible for an internship at our facility you must be: a) enrolled as a student in an APA or CPA-approved clinical or counseling doctoral program and b) a citizen of the United States or Canada by the first day of the internship. The DC VAMC adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. This internship site agrees to abide by the APPIC Policy that no person at this training facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from any intern applicant.

We participate in the APPIC Matching program for psychology internship positions. Only those applicants who participate in the Match can be matched to our internship. Our site requires the AAPI Application.

Application requirements:

- A cover letter noting rotations of interest
- the completed AAPI
- Three letters of recommendation
- A de-identified, adult psychological assessment, which may include personality and/or cognitive components

An onsite interview is required for acceptance into the internship. Due to the volume of applicants, we are unable to interview every student who applies to our internship. All applicants will be notified of their interview status by December 15. Please do not call us to ask whether you have been selected for an interview. We do not conduct telephone interviews. Staff members from each of the available rotations will be available to answer your questions. We will also give you the opportunity to ask questions of a current interns.

Please observe the APPIC policy that prohibits applicants from communicating to us any ranking-related information before the release of the Match results. APPIC match policies can be downloaded by clicking on the following link: <https://www.appic.org/Internships/Match/Match-Policies>

Should you match to our site, the following requirements apply to all Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) within the Veterans Health Administration and *would need to be met before your start date*:

1. **U.S. Citizenship.** HPTs who receive a direct stipend (pay) must be U.S. citizens.
2. **U.S. Social Security Number.** All VA appointees must have a U.S. social security number (SSN) prior to beginning the pre-employment, on-boarding process at the VA.
3. **Selective Service Registration.** Federal law requires that most males living in the US between the ages of 18 and 26 register with the Selective Service System. Male, for this purpose, is any individual born male on their birth certificate regardless of current gender. Males required to register, but who failed to do so by their 26th birthday, are barred from any position in any Executive Agency. Visit <https://www.sss.gov> to register, print proof of registration or apply for a Status Information Letter.
4. **Background Investigation.** All HPTs will be fingerprinted and undergo screenings and background investigations. Additional details about the required background checks can be found at the following website: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html>.
5. **Drug Testing.** Per Executive Order 12564 the VA strives to be a Drug-Free Workplace. HPTs are not drug-tested prior to appointment, however, will be subject to random drug testing throughout the entire VA appointment period. You will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form stating you are aware of this practice.
6. **Affiliation Agreement.** To ensure shared responsibility between an academic program and the VA there must be a current and fully executed Academic Affiliation Agreement on file with the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). The affiliation agreement delineates the duties of VA and the affiliated institution. Most APA- accredited doctoral programs have an agreement on file. More information about this document can be found at <http://www.va.gov/oaa/agreements.asp> (see section on psychology internships). Post-degree programs typically will not have an affiliation agreement, as the HPT is no longer enrolled in an academic program and the program is VA sponsored.
7. **TQCVL.** To streamline on-boarding of HPTs, VHA Office of Academic Affiliations requires completion of a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). An Educational Official at the Affiliate must complete and sign this letter. For post-graduate programs where an affiliate is not the program sponsor, this process must be completed by the VA Training Director. Your VA appointment cannot happen until the TQCVL is submitted and signed by senior leadership from the VA facility. For more information about this document, please visit <https://www.va.gov/OAA/TQCVL>.

To meet the standards of the Veterans Administration as well as various state licensing boards, the internship is 2080 hours in duration over a 52-week period. Hours cannot be accrued for credit at a rate greater than 40 per week except under extraordinary circumstances. Interns are employees who accrue four hours of annual leave and four hours of sick leave every two weeks. In addition, interns have the following ten holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor

Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. We also allow up to 5 days for professional development opportunities.

We expect that, under normal conditions, the internship will be completed within one calendar year. The Psychology Service does not conduct a two-year, half-time internship. As noted earlier, the internship year starts in late July, depending on the federal pay period at that time.

The Internal Revenue Service has held that intern pay is taxable as income; interns will thus find state, federal, and social security taxes withheld from paychecks. Intern and Postdoctoral salaries are determined by the VA Office of Academic Affiliations and is based on a national average salary with adjustments for the DC area cost of living. **The Intern Salary for 2019-2020 is \$29,078.** This is comparable to the salaries of other health trainees in the VA system (medical residents, pharmacy residents, etc.). Benefits include: 13 days annual leave per year, 13 days sick leave per year, 10 paid Federal Holidays per year, and Health insurance. Additional information regarding leave and benefits can be found in the administrative supplement to the Trainee Handbook.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to review our Internship Training Brochure. We look forward to reviewing your application. If you have any further questions about the internship training experience, do not hesitate to email the Acting Director of Psychology Training Programs, Dr. Leah Squires at **Leah.Squires@va.gov**.